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ABSTRACT

The efforts of university libraries in the United States to develop and implement rational plans are exemplified by the activities of the Association of Research Libraries, originator of various plans for library cooperation including the Farmington Plan and the National Program for Acquisitions and Cataloging. Another example of effective cooperation among university libraries is the Center for Research Libraries, a libraries' library from which 78 members borrow needed publication. Recently, developments deriving from technological change have given rise to a number of important new agencies capable of rendering machine-based services to large numbers of libraries, such as the Ohio College Library Center. An effective national library system will require further planning and cooperation in the areas of development of resources, bibliographic control and access, physical access to resources and communication systems, and preservation of printed materials. Existing projects can provide the groundwork for a national system, but continued planning will be necessary. (Author/PF)

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NATIONAL PLANNING AND ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

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NATIONAL PLANNING AND ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Dr. Herman H. Fussler, formerly Director of Libraries at the University of Chicago and now Martin A. Ryerson Distinguished Service Professor in the University of Chicago's Graduate Library School, is surely one of this country's most thoughtful students of academic libraries. In a 1972 "Report on Some Aspects of Libraries and Technology" prepared at the request of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, Dr. Fussler makes the following statement: "There is presently no satisfactory mechanism for national planning or analysis in the field of academic library service or information access." It should be understood that Dr. Fussler was referring to the United States, but if his statement is true, as I believe it to be, what can then be said about today's topic "National Planning and Academic Libraries?"

The answer is that despite the absence until very recently of any planning that deserves to be called "national" in scale there have been a number of efforts throughout the years that have achieved something like a national impact. It is my intention today to remind this audience of some of the effective programs of the past, to describe briefly some of the more significant recent efforts, and finally to try to suggest what the future may hold in the way of rational planning

for academic library resources and services. For the most part my remarks will deal with the larger university libraries--those containing a million volumes or more--since to try to deal with the smaller university libraries, not to mention the thousands of college, junior college and community college libraries, would clearly be beyond the limitations of a paper of this sort. Moreover, it seems likely that planning that has worked in the past or shows promise of working in the future to alleviate the complex problems of the largest libraries is the sort of planning that will produce benefits applicable to academic libraries of every kind and size. In short, the group I have in mind is roughly synonymous with the membership of the Association of Research Libraries. For our present purpose this group of ninety-four libraries has the great advantage of including the major federal libraries here in Washington whose participation is crucial to the success of any national planning. It also includes the New York and Boston Public libraries, the Center for Research Libraries, a few specialized research libraries and very importantly in terms of long-range planning it includes the National Library of Canada and the libraries of four major Canadian universities.

Having indicated the kinds of libraries with which I am concerned, let me now try to make clear what planning means in the context of this paper. Planning should be understood as a system of decision-making.

Thus, the main elements of a planning system are: (1) the setting of policy goals, (2) developing programs and projects for moving toward the goals within a specified period of time, (3) designing policies for mobilizing resources (e.g. collections and services, manpower, funds, etc.) required for the programs and projects, (4) providing information about the progress made and the obstacles encountered in the execution of the programs and projects, (5) providing a mechanism for adopting policies designed to overcome obstacles and to adjust the plan to errors when they become apparent, if necessary by modifying the current plan, and (6) preparing for a subsequent plan.

I think you will agree that this is a very comprehensive definition of planning and those of you who know something of the situation here in the United States will recognize that our efforts to date fall considerably short of anything so ambitious. It is not surprising that in a country as vast as this, faced with library problems of great complexity, our attempts to plan have found their focus in agencies or organizations whose interests are circumscribed either functionally or geographically. This piece-meal approach is not necessarily undesirable (indeed many feel that this is the most promising approach), but it does mean that a good deal of planning has gone forward in the name of one or another specific mission such as resource development, bibliographic control, physical access, and so forth. Where the geographical approach controls we find a variety of local, state, and regional groups assuming responsibility

for planning within their appropriate areas. Other groups such as those concerned with periodicals and serials base their activities on the form of the material. Still others take the chronological approach, focussing their attention either on current or retrospective resources. And finally there are many groups at work that exhibit some characteristics of each of these types.

I suppose that all of this activity bespeaks an admirable vitality in the library profession in this country, but it also must present serious problems of evaluation to those who are expected to provide funds for so many competing activities. While the pluralistic approach surely has its virtues there can be little doubt that it disperses financial support to such an extent that funds are often inadequate both in amount and duration. The bewildering assortment of cooperative library activities also confronts the writer of a descriptive report of this sort with the difficult task of trying to decide which among many possibilities are most germane to the theme of this IFLA Conference and the subject of today's discussion.

I think the best I can do is to try to select a few organizations and activities that have been unique in their impact or influence, such as the Association of Research Libraries and the Center for Research Libraries, or have proved to be important prototypes such as the Ohio

College Library Center (OCLC). I shall also say a word or two about one of the newest collaborative undertakings, the recently-formed Research Libraries Group (RLG). Finally I mean to say something about the need for planning and the responses to that need currently being put forward by bodies such as the ARL, the Council on Library Resources and the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science.

One of the best way to comprehend the efforts of university libraries to develop and implement rational plans is to look back over the activities of the Association of Research Libraries. No other organization has so consistently represented the interests of university and research libraries in the country and, until the Council on Library Resources came into being and more recently the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, little in the way of planning occurred outside the ARL. In saying this I do not mean to ignore or to depreciate the very important efforts of the Library of Congress and the other national libraries nor do I mean to overlook the contributions of many federal agencies, notably the National Science Foundation and the Office of Education. My point is simply that in activities largely or exclusively related to large university and research libraries the Association of Research Libraries has assumed a position of leadership and has achieved a solid record of accomplishment.

Stephen McCarthy who has contributed so greatly to the success of the ARL first as a representative from Cornell University from 1946 to 1967 and since then as Executive Director of the ARL has described some of the Association's most noteworthy activities as follows:

> "...The ARL was established to deal with the common problems of research libraries, hence much of its work has been concerned with resources for research and bibliographic access. The best known of these programs is the Farmington Plan, whose objective is to assure that at least one copy of all publications of value for research is available in the United States. The Farmington Plan began in 1949 and is still in operation. Under this program over fifty participating libraries agreed to acquire all current publications in various subject fields or from various geographic areas, to catalog them, and to make them available on interlibrary loan. The Farmington Plan is thus a decentralized cooperative acquisitions program.
>
> The PL-480 program of the Library of Congress is in some respects similar to the Farmington Plan. It is operated in developing countries in which counterpart funds are available for the purchase of multiple copies of current publications which are deposited in sets in selected research libraries. The American Council of Learned Societies and

ARL cooperated with LC in initiating this program.

The National Program for Acquisitions and Cataloging (NPAC) began as an effort of the Shared Cataloging Committee of ARL. This committee set out to eliminate duplication in cataloging by research libraries. As the effort progressed, it seemed that the objective might best be attained by centralizing and speeding up cataloging at the Library of Congress. To do this cataloging, it was necessary that LC acquire the books to be cataloged. At this time the Higher Education Act of 1965, with a section providing support for selected library activities, was under consideration by Congress. The committee recommended an amendment which authorized LC to acquire and catalog promptly foreign publications of scholarly and research value and provided special funds for this purpose.

The amendment was adopted, and the program has been in operation since that time. What began as a cataloging effort has become the major foreign acquisitions and cataloging program of LC. As it has developed, this program has involved bibliographic centers in foreign countries, and thus "Shared Cataloging" has come to have a new international meaning."

Since the foregoing was written, important changes have been made in all three of these programs, but they still have in common a quality that Warren J. Haas has characterized as "amplified impact." By this he no doubt means that by eliminating or reducing duplication of effort these programs result in significant savings for all participating libraries. Programs having this multiple cost-saving potential should feature prominently in any national plan proposed for the United States now or in the future.

Among other important projects that have been initiated, supported, sponsored and/or administered by the ARL are the following: Library of Congress Catalogs, Foreign Newspaper Microfilm Project, Documents Expediting Product, Microform Technology Project, Slavic Bibliographic and Documentation Center, National Serials Data Program, and Dissertation Abstracts. Currently the ARL also operates the Office of University Library Management Studies with support from the Council on Library Resources and the Center for Chinese Research Materials funded by the Ford Foundation assisted recently by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Whether all of these activities of the ARL when taken together constitute a plan is open to serious question, but their cumulative effect has certainly advanced the important causes of resource development, bibliographic control, and access to research materials. It is not now

clear what activities the ARL will choose to emphasize in the future, but later in this paper I shall indicate some of the likeliest possibilities as I see them. My impression is that the views of library leaders in this country are converging and that the future thrust of the ARL will be in reasonable harmony with the main currents of professional thinking and planning.

Another example of effective cooperation among university libraries is The Center for Research Libraries, founded in 1949 as the Midwest Inter-Library Center to serve certain common purposes of ten universities in the central portion of the country. Directed toward achieving improvement of resources and economy of operations the Center's initial activities were as follows:

1. Cooperative collection and housing of little-used material for the use of the region as a whole
2. Developing a program for filling out and enriching the resources of the region
3. Development of cooperative bibliographic projects.

So successful were its efforts and so applicable were its services to a broader constituency that in 1964 the Center dropped all geographic restrictions on membership. No longer was membership limited to institutions located in the ten Midwestern states, but was open to any

institution that supported research and maintained a library which, as a rough guide, contained at least 500,000 volumes and spent approximately $200,000 per year on acquisitions and binding. Smaller libraries were eligible for associate membership. With the change in policy and the change in name to Center for Research Libraries membership rose quickly until today there are 78 full members and 59 associate members. Thus CRL exhibits a characteristic that has distinguished other successful library organizations in this country, namely the ability to evolve from an organization of limited objectives, limited clientele, or limited geographical focus into a broadly-based organization capable of serving the purposes of a national constituency.

The basic purpose of the Center remains much as it always was: that is to be a library from which other libraries can borrow needed publications that they do not have in their own collections and that they anticipate will be needed so infrequently that they cannot justify buying them for themselves. As a libraries' library, then, the CRL stands as an example of success in several things: the first is planning; second, implementation; third, operation; and fourth, growth and development. If, as many believe, library planning here should follow the highly attractive example being set for the rest of us by Great Britain, then surely the Center for Research Libraries must be a prominent candidate for inclusion in any such federation of library and bibliographical activities proposed for this country.

This backward glance has perhaps provided a sufficient sampling of planning efforts that have involved university libraries. The past programs of the ARL, the several activities of the Center for Research Libraries, and similar efforts were responsive to needs and problems of earlier years. While many of these problems are still with us there are now new means for dealing with them and there may also be new reasons for doing so. The means I have in mind are two-fold. First, there are the obvious technological advances with which we are all familiar--computers, microforms, copying devices, and so forth; second, and much more important in my view, the intellectual progress that has rendered the machines so useful. Call it software, essential logic, what you will, but all such labels are simply shorthand for invaluable advances such as MARC and RECON at the Library of Congress, MEDLARS and MEDLINE at the National Library of Medicine, and a host of other developments in and out of the federal government.

Developments of these kinds, deriving from technological change, have given rise to a number of important new agencies capable of rendering machine-based services to large numbers of libraries. Perhaps the most famous of these is the Ohio College Library Center. OCLC, as it is usually called, began as a consortium of academic libraries in Ohio whose goals were to increase the effectiveness and reduce the cost of basic library operations through the use of a central shared

computer facility. The OCLC presently offers to some fifty Ohio colleges and universities and a number of out-of-state groups an on-line, interactive cataloging capability, and on-line access to a large union catalog of those holdings of member institutions that have been entered into the system's data base. Ultimately five other modules: (1) serials control; (2) an in-process file; (3) a name-authority index; (4) circulation-control; and (5) subject-search capability will be added to the system. The first three of these are well along in development.

The success of OCLC has stimulated the establishment of many similar regional groups. In turn many of these groups are contracting with OCLC for services and a number of them are actively engaged in future replication of the OCLC system. For this and other reasons the Ohio College Library Center is a very significant library network development and another likely element in future planning for library service at the national level.

Although it is a most promising development OCLC has by no means solved all the problems of library automation and networking. OCLC supports a number of small to medium-sized libraries, but the problems of very large libraries are probably different and are almost certainly more difficult. One approach to the problems of the very large libraries is the newly-incorporated Research Libraries Group.

RLG provides a framework for joint action by four great research libraries--Columbia, Harvard, Yale and the New York Public Library. According to its founders "RLG was established to improve availability of and access to recorded materials in member libraries. It contemplates the use of highly developed computer and communications technology on a concerted basis. Among the first plans of RLG is the establishment of a bibliographic data center at New Haven to provide effective access to a combined collection of approximately 26 1/2 million volumes. The consortium will also be able to help each institution cope realistically with the compounding financial concerns which each of the member libraries faces." The RLG plan envisages eventual expansion, but the nature of that expansion has not been predetermined.

RLG is but one attempt to respond to an ever more clearly perceived need to plan for the uncertain future of large libraries. Like OCLC it may prove to be a model for other groups yet to be formed. It has set certain tasks for itself that, in the view of many university librarians, are basic prerequisites to the participation of research libraries in a national system. As Stanley McElderry has said, "If we are to provide an effective system on a national basis, we need to adopt new approaches to building, maintaining and servicing library collections. A few of the requirements for a workable national system are: (1) a more precise

definition of the resources needed for present and future scholarly endeavor; (2) a systematic and comprehensive approach to acquiring such resources; (3) an organization to index these resources under uniform bibliographic authority and conventions; (4) a coordinated approach for allocation of these resources with a central record of the location of each title; (5) a communication system to transmit requests and exchange messages promptly (teletype, computer data bases, and telefacsimile networks); and (6) a faster, more dependable delivery system than that now available through our traditional inter-library loan operation."

To these requirements which after all apply primarily to current and future publications, we should add at least two others if we are also to improve the availability of retrospective materials. The first of these is a national program for the preservation of books printed on paper that is rapidly deteriorating. The second is closely related to the first and is a program for creating a national collection of negative microfilm to serve the needs of on-demand publication or loan.

With these several requirements in mind we must now ask what progress is being made toward fulfilling them in order that academic libraries may meet the over-riding objective of providing better access to recorded information?

With respect to the development of resources, the remaining elements of the Farmington Plan, the National Program for Acquisitions and Cataloging (NPAC), and various projects of the Center for Research Libraries are adding significantly to the holdings of scholarly libraries in this country. Specialized activities such as the ARL's Center for Chinese Research Materials are also contributing.

With respect to bibliographic control and access, the cataloging module of the National Program for Acquisitions and Cataloging (NPAC) is but one of many efforts of the Library of Congress to assume the responsibilities of a true national bibliographic center. With financial support and encouragement from the Council on Library Resources, the Machine-Readable Cataloging (MARC) Project, the Retrospective Conversion of Catalog Records (RECON), the National Serials Program, etc., are either now contributing or have the potential for contributing to the development of a national bibliographic data base. Ways need to be found better to relate these efforts to those going on outside the Library of Congress.

With respect to physical access to resources and systems for improving communications and delivery, considerable research has been undertaken but decisions as to next steps are still pending.

The Association of Research Libraries has conducted several studies relating to interlibrary loan activity. One study examined the relative merits of national versus regional interlibrary loan centers. Another study deals with the feasibility of employing a time-sharing computer system for monitoring interlibrary loan traffic and a third study has to do with a National Periodical Resource Center to collect and loan publications on a comprehensive basis for the support of all libraries. A pilot project of this sort is already underway at the Center for Research Libraries. In view of the high costs of interlibrary loans and serious imbalances in the present systems, rapid progress in this area is crucial.

With respect to preservation activities and the pooling of retrospective materials in microform, the requirements are so staggering as to make our efforts seem insignificant. Almost from its founding the Council on Library Resources has interested itself in preservation problems and has supported a variety of research projects directed towards these problems. The Association of Research Libraries has undertaken at least two major preservation studies, but the means for carrying out the recommendations of these studies have not been found. A few major libraries, for example the Library of Congress and the New York Public Library have established preservation offices and apparently the Research Libraries Group will make some effort

to establish a preservation program, but individual libraries or even small groups of libraries cannot hope to make much headway against problems of this magnitude. Resources equal to the task can never be secured unless the federal government recognizes that the preservation of library materials is an inseparable part of the broader objective of access to recorded information. Much the same may be said about the need to establish national collections of microfilm and this problem is further complicated by proprietary interests and some vagueness in the copyright law. The cause of access to recorded information as a public right and in the public interest is one to which librarians give virtually unanimous support. It is our hope that national planning will further this cause and that any system of access we devise will be as free as possible of restrictions, limitations and constraints.

From the foregoing it should be clear that while much remains to be done much has already been accomplished. The ground work for a national system exists. As William Dix has said, "university libraries and a few rather similar national and independent research libraries constitute a major national resource, a de facto network creating a vast pool of recorded knowledge and information essential to education and to the advancement of learning without which modern society could not exist. This network has evolved unsystematically

and without adequate planning and its links are at present quite imperfect, but we are beginning to see the emergence of a coherent, integrated whole. Its viability will depend upon a judicious balance between centers of local excellence, immediately accessible to users, and a variety of centralized activities, integrated through a computer-based system of bibliographic control."

Although we recognize the various elements that together may give us a workable system, and although we now have technology needed to allow those elements to work together many complex problems remain. Some of these problems are institutional, some of them are organizational, most of them are political in the sense that they require the attention of the nation's leaders and demand a share of the nation's financial resources. All of them underscore the continuing need for planning if we are to create a more effective national system of information and literature access. The need exists. As the Congress affirmed in establishing the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, "library and information services adequate to meet the needs of the people of the United States are essential to achieve national goals and to utilize most effectively the nation's educational resources."

In closing I can offer no more eloquent or persuasive statement on the need for planning than the following quotation from my fellow panelist

D. T. Richnell. In his presidential address at the Annual Conference of the Library Association in May of 1970, he said, "The immense growth in world literature, in the demands upon it, in new means of communication, supplementing rather than replacing the printed word; the immense growth in the numbers of libraries and information services; and in the technical innovations that can be invoked to assist or even to replace existing methods; all these have produced an equally self-evident need for planning not merely how best, or how most cheaply, bits of information can be communicated to facilitate technical and scientific advance, but also how best the library and information systems network can be planned to serve the total cultural needs locally, regionally and nationally."

That in a single beautiful sentence is the problem for the United States just as much as it is for Great Britain or any other country. It is also our challenge and though this paper touches on only a few of the ways in which we are responding to that challenge, I hope I have conveyed some sense of the thought and energy that are being devoted to making academic libraries full partners in the effort to provide all the citizens of the United States with convenient access to library resources and information services.